

*Ithaca, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that Alternatives Federal Credit Union based in Ithaca has been awarded \$2 million in federal economic recovery funds to help spur economic growth in the city and surrounding area. The funds come from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which Hinchey actively supported and voted for in Congress earlier this year. The U.S. Treasury Department is administering the funds through its Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund.

"This federal funding will help Alternatives Federal Credit Union expand its operation so that more area residents can gain access to the capital they need in this tough credit market for various home and other investments that will benefit the community," Hinchey said. "This funding will help promote increased lending, which will lead to economic growth. I'm very pleased that the Ithaca area will benefit from this influx of federal support."

Alternatives Federal Credit Union is a Community Development Credit Union and a certified CDFI. Established in 1997, serves seven counties in central New York state, including the city of Ithaca. It provides a combination of financial services and products. Among the services it provides are free tax preparation, homebuyer counseling, and microenterprise development training. Alternatives will use its CDFI Program award to expand beyond its single branch location and to support lending to those who will invest in properties and other initiatives in the region. The credit union will also work with borrowers to ensure that they manage their finances appropriately.

The CDFI program invests in and builds the capacity of a nationwide network of community-based financial institutions with a primary mission of community development in economically distressed urban, rural, and Native communities. The CDFI Fund receives applications on an annual basis and awards funds through a competitive process.